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Security Council
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Thursday, 4 December 1997, 12.25 p.m.
New York

President:	Mr. Berrocal Soto	(Costa Rica)
Members:	Chile	Mr. Eguiguren
	China	Mr. Qin Huasun
	Egypt	Mr. Abdel Aziz
	France	Mr. Dejammet
	Guinea-Bissau	Mr. Cabral
	Japan	Mr. Owada
	Kenya	Mr. Mahugu
	Poland	Mr. Matuszewski
	Portugal	Mr. Monteiro
	Republic of Korea	Mr. Hahm
	Russian Federation	Mr. Lavrov
	Sweden	Mr. Lidén
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Mr. Gomersall
	United States of America	Mr. Richardson

Agenda

The situation in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia

Report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Preventive Deployment Force pursuant to Security Council resolution 1110 (1997) (S/1997/911 and Add.1)

97-86665 (E)

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The meeting was called to order at 12.25 p.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

The situation in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia

Report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Preventive Deployment Force pursuant to Security Council resolution 1110 (1997) (S/1997/911 and Add.1)

The President (*interpretation from Spanish*): I should like to inform the Council that I have received letters from the representatives of Germany, Italy and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, in which they request to be invited to participate in the discussion of the item on the Council's agenda. In conformity with the usual practice, I propose, with the consent of the Council, to invite those representatives to participate in the discussion, without the right to vote, in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Charter and rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

At the invitation of the President, Mr. Čalovski (the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia) took a seat at the Council table; Mr. Henze (Germany) and Mr. Terzi di Sant'Agata (Italy) took the seats reserved for them at the side of the Council Chamber.

The President (*interpretation from Spanish*): The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda. The Council is meeting in accordance with the understanding reached in its prior consultations.

Members of the Council have before them the report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Preventive Deployment Force pursuant to Security Council resolution 1110 (1997), contained in document S/1997/911 and addendum 1. Members of the Council also have before them document S/1997/948, which contains the text of a draft resolution submitted by Costa Rica, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, Portugal, the Russian Federation, Sweden, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the United States of America.

I should like to draw the attention of the members of the Council to document S/1997/838 and corrigendum 1, which contains the text of a letter dated 3 November 1997 from the Permanent Representative of the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General.

The first speaker inscribed on my list is the representative of the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, to whom I give the floor.

Mr. Čalovski (the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia): Let me first express the satisfaction of my delegation, Mr. President, at seeing you, the representative of Costa Rica, presiding over the Security Council for the month of December. You can count on my delegation's cooperation and support.

The Council is going to adopt an important decision for the maintenance of peace and security in the region of my country, the Republic of Macedonia. It will decide on the further extension of the mandate of the United Nations Preventive Deployment Force (UNPREDEP), at present the only preventive peace mission of the United Nations. We are pleased that the Council succeeded in concluding successfully its consultations, which will now enable the mission to continue with its important preventive peace activities in our region.

Regrettably, the sad story of the Balkan crisis is not over; it is continuing. It is appropriate that the Council decided to consider the extension of the UNPREDEP mandate in the light of the present situation in the Balkans and of possible developments in the region.

In the letter of the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Macedonia addressed to the Secretary-General, the main characteristics of the situation in our region are clearly spelt out. They are also underlined in the Secretary-General's report. It is not necessary, therefore, for me to repeat what was said in my Foreign Minister's letter and in the Secretary-General's report. But it is important to stress that the concerns about the developments in our region are real. I would like to express my Government's satisfaction that these concerns are being considered and taken into account in the decision to extend the mandate of the mission.

In our view, the situation in the Balkans will not improve as much as we would like it to improve in the coming nine months. For this reason, and with the aim of preventing new conflicts, solving the present ones, implementing the Dayton Agreement, developing better good-neighbourly relations among Balkan States and

integrating them into the European structures, first and foremost the European Union, determined efforts by the international community and the United Nations are needed and must continue. Those are the main reasons for my Government's view that a 12-month extension was appropriate.

The Secretary-General's report is very informative on one aspect of the work of UNPREDEP and with regard to the activities of other United Nations organizations, agencies and programmes in my country. We are informed that the United Nations Development Programme will soon open its office in Skopje, to take care of these activities in the future — one burden less for UNPREDEP.

Before concluding, I would like to express my Government's gratitude to the Governments that have made their military and police personnel available to UNPREDEP, and its satisfaction over the excellent cooperation with the Secretary-General, with the Department of Peacekeeping Operations, with the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Mr. Henryk J. Sokalski, who is the head of the UNPREDEP mission, with the Force Commander, Brigadier General Bent Sohnemann and, of course, with all the personnel of the mission. At the same time, I would like to stress our conviction that cooperation will continue to be excellent. The standing of UNPREDEP in my country is very high. I am sure that it will remain so in the coming months.

The extension of the UNPREDEP mandate represents an important contribution of the Security Council to the effort to maintain peace and security in the Balkans.

The President (*interpretation from Spanish*): I thank the representative of the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia for his kind words addressed to me.

The next speaker inscribed on my list is the representative of Germany. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Henze (Germany) (*interpretation from Spanish*): Allow me first to say, Mr. President, what a great pleasure and honour it is for me to be participating in a meeting of the Security Council under your presidency. I congratulate you on your assumption of this important post at such an important time.

(*spoke in English*)

Let me also thank you, Sir, for this opportunity to express my Government's views on the situation in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and regarding the extension of the mandate of the United Nations Preventive Deployment Force (UNPREDEP). Germany is a member of the Contact Group and of the Coordinating and Consultative Process (CCP), which prepared the draft resolution before the Council today. But first and foremost it is a country with particularly close ties and friendly relations with the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia. Therefore, it has taken and continues to take a strong interest in developments in the region and in the future of UNPREDEP.

UNPREDEP operates in a region that is still particularly volatile and unstable. The mission started out as a preventive effort to prevent a spillover from conflicts in the other parts of the former Yugoslavia. Earlier this year, the focus shifted towards the civil unrest in neighbouring Albania and a possible spillover to groups of Albanian origin in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia. Thanks mainly to the good offices of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, in the person of former Austrian Chancellor Franz Vranitzky, and also to the multinational protection force mandated by the Council, the situation in Albania has stabilized considerably. Inter-ethnic relations in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia remain of concern, but do not seem to have been directly affected by the crisis in Albania.

Today, it is the situation in the Kosovo region of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, characterized by repression and recent terrorist acts, which is deteriorating and giving rise to fears of destabilization also in the area of operation of UNPREDEP. Germany strongly encourages the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia to enter into a peaceful dialogue with the Kosovo Albanians on a solution to the crisis.

With preventive missions — and UNPREDEP is a model in this regard — it is always particularly difficult to gauge the degree of success. It is similarly difficult to decide when a preventive mission has satisfactorily completed its task and is no longer necessary. This is due to the fact that the lack of negative events, that is, the forestalling of destabilization, is the goal to be achieved, and there can never be absolute certainty that the preservation of stability is really due to the presence of the mission, or perhaps would have been possible even

without it. Nevertheless, there seems to be general agreement that UNPREDEP has been a success story that the United Nations and the Council can claim full credit for, and we entirely share this assessment. Germany also believes that we should take no chances by ending the international military presence in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia before a sufficient degree of stability is achieved throughout the surrounding region.

In view of this situation, Germany supports the draft resolution before the Council today, which foresees an extension of UNPREDEP's mandate for nine months. We are also looking forward to the recommendations requested from the Secretary-General for the most appropriate type of international presence after the end of this mandate period.

Let me end by expressing my appreciation to the Secretary-General's Special Representative, Mr. Henryk Sokalski, to the Force Commander, Brigadier General Bent Sohnemann, and to all members of UNPREDEP for their successful work in preserving peace and stability in the region.

The President (*interpretation from Spanish*): I thank the representative of Germany for his kind words addressed to me in Spanish.

The next speaker on my list is the representative of Italy. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Terzi di Sant'Agata (Italy): Mr. President, let me take this opportunity to congratulate you on your assumption of the Presidency of the Security Council for the month of December. There can be no doubt that under your wise guidance, this month's work will be successful. At the same time, I wish to compliment your predecessor, Ambassador Qin Huasun of China, for his exemplary leadership of the Council in November.

Italy fully shares the Secretary-General's assessment, contained in his report of 20 November 1997 [S/1997/911], that over the past five years, the United Nations Preventive Deployment Force (UNPREDEP) has successfully helped prevent the spillover of conflicts from elsewhere in the region into the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia. UNPREDEP sets an important precedent in the preventive deployment of United Nations forces, and has been a success story whose results should not be wasted or jeopardized.

The United Nations mission has promoted dialogue among the various political forces and ethnic communities, provided humanitarian assistance to the local population, and enhanced social integration and institution building. The operation is making a decisive contribution to the stabilization of the political situation in the country, sheltering it from the dangers of increased tensions that could stem from continued instability in the region.

However, we also agree with the Secretary-General that peace and stability in the country continue to depend largely on developments in other parts of the region. While the Secretary-General's report underlines an improvement in the situation in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, we cannot ignore the elements of precariousness that continue to exist.

Italy has also noted the request of the Foreign Minister of the host Government, Mr. Blagoj Handziski, for a 12-month extension of the UNPREDEP mandate, and was ready to support it. In his letter to the Secretary-General [S/1997/838, annex], Mr. Handziski expressed his Government's concern over the continued sources of destabilization in the region, and in particular the situation in Kosovo and in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Italy agrees with these assessments. While the situation in Albania has greatly improved in the past few months, thanks also to the prompt response of the international community, and especially the Security Council, which rapidly authorized the Italian-led multinational protection force in the country, there can be no doubt that tensions persist in the region.

In our view, these circumstances would make any withdrawal of UNPREDEP forces at this stage premature, and risk sending the wrong signal. We should not forget that the original purpose of deploying a United Nations mission in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia was to prevent it from being destabilized by conflicts elsewhere in the area. Therefore, the situation in the country should not only be considered by itself, but also in the broader context of regional developments.

This is why we welcome the recommendations contained in the Secretary-General's report, and have sponsored today's draft resolution to extend the mandate of UNPREDEP, in its present configuration, for nine months. In this respect, as part of the Coordinating and Consultative Process and of the Contact Group, my delegation would like to praise the spirit of flexibility and

compromise that has prevailed, thus allowing this extension.

In fact, this nine-month period appears to be the minimum requirement for ensuring that, once the UNPREDEP operation terminates, proper successor arrangements will be put in place to guarantee the international community's ongoing commitment to the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia. Italy stands by this commitment.

The President (*interpretation from Spanish*): I thank the representative of Italy for his kind words addressed to me.

It is my understanding that the Council is ready to vote on the draft resolution before it. Unless I hear any objection, I shall put the draft resolution to the vote.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

I shall first give the floor to those members of the Council who wish to make statements before the voting.

Mr. Monteiro (Portugal): As just underlined by the two previous speakers, the representatives of Germany and Italy, the United Nations Preventive Deployment Force (UNPREDEP) has performed its mandate with remarkable effectiveness and success, preventing the spillover of conflict into the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia from other parts of that volatile region. Now that its tasks have been largely fulfilled, we fully support the Secretary-General's intention to elaborate the next strategy for UNPREDEP and to design an appropriate and effective successor arrangement. Above all, those efforts will seek to maintain the stability afforded by UNPREDEP.

Continued uncertainty, particularly instability in Kosovo, as well as elsewhere in the region, makes it necessary to proceed with caution in the replacement of UNPREDEP. We must keep in mind that UNPREDEP also plays an important role internally due to the fact that it has the confidence and support of all ethnic and political forces. This valuable contribution should not be jeopardized.

According to the Secretary-General, there is a need to observe the effectiveness of UNPREDEP following the reduction of the military component pursuant to Security Council resolution 1110 (1997). Furthermore, the severe winter conditions of the region make it difficult to downsize further the mission before the spring of 1998.

Taking all these considerations into account, Portugal supports the extension of the mandate of UNPREDEP, as recommended by the Secretary-General, but for a longer final period of almost nine months. This will allow the withdrawal of UNPREDEP to be adequately prepared for, and will give the Secretary-General time to look at all the possible options for replacing that Force. We look forward to receiving his recommendations on what type of international presence would be most appropriate after the expiration of UNPREDEP's mandate.

As a sponsor of the resolution before the Council, Portugal will of course be voting in favour of it. As a contributor of personnel to UNPREDEP, Portugal would like to pay tribute to all the military and civilian personnel of UNPREDEP, and thank them for their commitment and hard work.

Mr. Qin Huasun (China) (*interpretation from Chinese*): We welcome the fact that the general situation in the former Yugoslavia is stable and continuing to improve. In our view, the continued maintenance of stability in the former Yugoslavia is conducive to the development of friendly and good-neighbourly relations and economic reconstruction by the countries of the region.

We are pleased to note that Macedonia and the other countries of the region are working towards the improvement of their mutual relations. We hope that these countries will continue to take effective measures, resolve their remaining differences, and soon begin living together in harmony, as is consistent with the fundamental interests of their peoples.

The task of the United Nations Preventive Deployment Force (UNPREDEP) is to prevent the spillover of the conflict in the former Yugoslavia into Macedonia. We have noted the recommendations by the Secretary-General and the interested parties on the question of extending UNPREDEP's mandate. We feel that its extension should be considered in conjunction with the current situation of stability in the region. We wish to reiterate that the political independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity of Macedonia should be respected.

Taking into account the request by Macedonia, the country concerned, for an extension of UNPREDEP's mandate, and on the basis of our consistent position, the

Chinese delegation will vote in favour of the draft resolution.

Mr. Owada (Japan): The Government of Japan attaches great importance to the stability of the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia as a key to the maintenance of peace and security in the entire Balkan region. In this context, the United Nations Preventive Deployment Force (UNPREDEP) has been successfully carrying out its mission for the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia in preventing the spillover of conflicts elsewhere in the region into that country. UNPREDEP represents one of the most successful examples of the preventive deployment of peacekeeping forces.

My delegation shares the view of the Secretary-General that a situation of peace and stability in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia is at this stage generally being maintained, although we should naturally be sensitive to the factors that might have a negative impact on this stability, such as the still fragile situation in the neighbouring countries and the inter-ethnic relations within the country itself.

In view of the overall situation in and around the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, my delegation agrees with the suggestion of the Secretary-General, contained in his latest report, that consideration of exit strategies, including the modalities of the termination of the operation of UNPREDEP, be commenced.

At the same time, my delegation takes note of the observation of the Secretary-General that any decision to further downsize the military component could hardly be implemented before the spring of 1998, owing to the severe winter conditions in the region. Furthermore, ample consideration should be given to the exit strategies and the type of future international presence that would be most appropriate in the wake of the exit of UNPREDEP from the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia.

Taking all these factors into account, my delegation will vote in favour of the draft resolution. This draft resolution, which has been drafted in principle in accordance with the basic lines of the recommendations of the Secretary-General, seeks to extend the mandate of UNPREDEP for the final period until 31 August 1998.

In the meantime, the exit strategies and the most appropriate type of international presence in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia in the future should be studied by this Council during the forthcoming period, in the light of the recommendations of the Secretary-General.

I should like to close my remarks by expressing the deep appreciation of my Government to the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Mr. Henryk Sokalski, and to the Force Commander, Brigadier General Bent Sohnemann, as well as to all the men and women working with UNPREDEP for their efforts and dedication in carrying out their important mission.

Mr. Dejammet (France) (*interpretation from French*): Naturally I would like to express my complete confidence in what we are sure will be the successful results of your presidency, Sir, and our great appreciation of the way in which the Council's work last month was conducted under the presidency of the Permanent Representative of China.

The United Nations Preventive Deployment Force (UNPREDEP) is a success. Its work has helped keep the crises in the Balkan region from spilling over into the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia. The success of this mission demonstrates the importance of a United Nations operation in preventing the outbreak of some conflicts. The example of UNPREDEP can thus prove useful in avoiding the spread of crises in other parts of the world, especially in Africa, where the need for preventive deployment by the United Nations is in many cases every bit as justified as in the case of the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia.

France shares the opinion expressed by the Secretary-General in his last report on the need to maintain UNPREDEP's presence. Admittedly, the situation in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and in the region is more encouraging in some areas today. However, there are still causes for concern, particularly in the light of risks linked to the Kosovo situation.

When the time comes, the modalities of the international presence in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia will probably have to be adapted to take account of developments within both the country and the region. However, this should not be rushed into. The time-frame in the draft resolution seems, under the circumstances, appropriate.

For all these reasons, France will vote in favour of the draft resolution.

Mr. Lidén (Sweden): Sweden has been a troop contributor since the very start of the United Nations Preventive Deployment Force (UNPREDEP). As such, we are proud to be a part of this very successful first United Nations preventive deployment mission. UNPREDEP will no doubt serve as an example for future preventive action by the Security Council.

The situation on the ground having improved, it is now possible to start considering alternative forms of international presence in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia. The withdrawal of the military component of UNPREDEP after the expiry of the mission's mandate in August next year must not mean the end of international support for the sovereignty and stability of the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia. My Government looks forward to the recommendations of the Secretary-General in June next year on how further to assist that country.

In more general terms, the success of UNPREDEP to date highlights the importance of the concept of preventive action. The lesson we have learned is that the international community, and in particular this Council, must act early and choose the adequate measures from the wide range of instruments available for conflict resolution. In the case of the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, preventive deployment of United Nations troops was clearly the right choice at the right time.

Another lesson could be that for a mission of this kind to be considered a success and an example for the future, it should not be prolonged indefinitely and without change. As circumstances on the ground evolve, the international community must be prepared to adjust the instruments of conflict resolution accordingly. This is what we want the United Nations to do in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia next year.

Sweden will vote in favour of the draft resolution before us.

Mr. Matuszewski (Poland): The Polish delegation welcomes the extension of the mandate of the United Nations Preventive Deployment Force (UNPREDEP) for a final period of nine months, until the end of August 1998. UNPREDEP has played an important and highly effective role in the preservation of peace and security in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and in the region. On many occasions members of the Security Council have referred to this mission as one of the success stories of the United Nations, and we fully share this view. The deployment of UNPREDEP and the activities of this peacekeeping force have clearly demonstrated the justification for and the merit of the concept of preventive diplomacy. The further presence of the United Nations Preventive Deployment Force will undoubtedly have a stabilizing and confidence-building effect in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and the entire region.

The Polish delegation agrees with the assessment of the Secretary-General, contained in his report of 20 November 1997, that peace and stability in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia continue to depend largely on developments in other parts of the region. Indeed, an uncertain and fragile regional situation prevails. We are concerned about the increased violence in Kosovo, incidents on the border of the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia with Albania, slow progress in implementing the civilian aspects of the Dayton Peace Agreement in Bosnia and Herzegovina and a lack of progress in the demarcation of the border between the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia.

In the internal sphere, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia has made commendable strides towards implementing democratic reforms, yet persistent socio-economic difficulties and inter-ethnic tensions are still fraught with destabilizing potential. These external and internal factors, as well as the request of the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and the recommendations of the Secretary-General, were taken into account by the Polish delegation in deciding to support the extension of the mandate of UNPREDEP at its current strength. We look forward to the recommendations of the Secretary-General on the post-UNPREDEP international presence in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia.

Finally, let me pay tribute to the military and civilian personnel of UNPREDEP for the dedication they have shown in performing their tasks and duties. I also wish to express my country's appreciation and support to the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Mr. Henryk Sokalski, and to the Force Commander, Brigadier General Bent Sohnemann, for the commendable manner in which they have conducted their activities in a difficult and sensitive environment.

Mr. Mahugu (Kenya): At the outset, let me state that my delegation will vote in favour of the draft resolution extending the mandate of the United Nations Preventive Deployment Force (UNPREDEP) for a final period of nine months, up to 31 August 1998. Kenya is

proud to have been associated with this important mission since its inception in 1995, contributing some of our best military officers as observers. We will continue to support this and other peacekeeping operations around the world.

The presence of UNPREDEP in the region has brought about an improvement of the relations between Macedonia and some of its neighbours. Since their deployment five years ago, UNPREDEP personnel have worked hard to prevent the spillover into Macedonia of conflicts occurring elsewhere in the region. In the process, UNPREDEP has promoted conflict resolution among the various political forces and ethnic communities.

UNPREDEP has also endeavoured to reach out to the vulnerable segments of society through institution-building and experience- sharing. As stated in the Secretary-General's report, these initiatives have played an important role in building confidence between the people of the host country and the mission. Other United Nations missions, present and future, may wish to benefit from this approach, which has proved to be effective in creating a good working environment between the mission and the people of the host country. In this regard, we wish to thank the men and women of UNPREDEP for the commitment and dedication that they have demonstrated in the performance of their duties.

My delegation welcomes the signing of the joint statement by the leaders of 11 political parties on three major issues, among them the country's relations with its neighbours. This is a positive development and is quite encouraging. However, much more remains to be done in order to achieve long-term peace and stability in Macedonia. Furthermore, peace and stability in Macedonia will continue to depend largely on developments in other parts of the region. The slow progress in the implementation of the Dayton Peace Agreement in Bosnia and Herzegovina, which has underscored the need for a long-term commitment by the international community in that country, is a case in point.

We therefore share the views that developments in the neighbouring countries and the inherent threats they pose to Macedonia are unpredictable. For example, the fact that there are 3,500 Bosnian refugees in Macedonia while only 252 refugees have gone back to Bosnia and Herzegovina could be an indication of the level of insecurity in that country for returning refugees.

We support the Secretary-General in his observation that there is continued need for a long-term commitment by the international community in Macedonia. In this regard, we welcome the macroeconomic programmes being put in place by, among others, the Bretton Woods institutions and the United Nations Development Programme. These programmes are critical for Macedonia's long-term development.

In supporting the final, nine-month extension of UNPREDEP's mandate, we have taken into account the fact that the host country itself has requested such an extension. In addition, the active support and cooperation of the host Government and ethnic forces in that country is commendable. This suggests that the parties in Macedonia recognize the important role that UNPREDEP continues to play in preventing the spillover into Macedonia of conflicts occurring elsewhere in that region.

Mr. Abdel Aziz (Egypt) (*interpretation from Arabic*): The delegation of Egypt supports the draft resolution before us today extending the mandate of the United Nations Preventive Deployment Force (UNPREDEP) for a final period of nine months, until 31 August 1998. In appreciation of that role, Egypt has supported, throughout its membership in the Council for the last two years, the resolutions under which the mandate of UNPREDEP was extended in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia.

With resolution 795 (1992) of 11 December 1992, the Security Council laid the basis for the first preventive peacekeeping operation under United Nations auspices by authorizing the deployment of the United Nations Protection Force (UNPROFOR) in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia. This contributed effectively to preventing the spread to that country of the military conflict in the region at that time.

The change of the name of that Force from UNPROFOR to UNPREDEP, in Security Council resolution 983 (1995) of 31 March 1995, reflected more clearly the successful preventive role that has been played by the United Nations peacekeeping force in that Republic. The decision to be taken by the Council today to extend the mandate of the Force for a final period five years after its initial deployment takes into account the positive developments in the region. At the same time it also highlights to a large extent time limits and other practical constraints on the United Nations role in shouldering of the full responsibility for such operations.

Undoubtedly, the experience of UNPREDEP deserves close study and analysis by the Security Council and by the Member States of the United Nations, as well as by the Secretariat, so that the successful elements of the operation can be employed in the future to effectively support the United Nations role in the maintenance of international peace and security.

In this context, it is probable that the most important of these elements, which must be highlighted, is the consent, the welcome and, indeed, the initiative made by the Government of the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia for the deployment of the Force on its territory. This was reflected later in the Government's full cooperation with the Force, which had the greatest impact in facilitating the successful discharge of its mandate.

It is our hope that the desired study by the Security Council of this preventive experience will lead to concrete conclusions that will help support the Council's credibility as regards its resolutions for the deployment of peacekeeping forces for preventive purposes in various regions and continents of the world.

As for the situation in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, we deem it important for the international community to build on the stability and the more secure environment in the Republic provided by the presence of UNPREDEP. We look forward to the recommendations of the Secretary-General concerning the alternatives for the future international presence there.

Finally, I would like to express our appreciation to Mr. Henryk Sokalski, Special Representative of the Secretary-General, for his efforts and to the Force Commander and the personnel of the Force for their contributions and their successful discharge of their duties.

Mr. Hahm (Republic of Korea): During the course of the past five years, the United Nations Preventive Deployment Force (UNPREDEP) in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, the first of its kind in United Nations history, has helped restore peace and stability to a region that had once been mired in inter-ethnic turmoil and the tragedy of war.

In particular, UNPREDEP has done much to effectively contain the spillover of conflicts from neighbouring countries, to promote inter-ethnic dialogue and to improve the overall human rights situation in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia. The Korean delegation very much appreciates and pays high tribute to all the UNPREDEP personnel, whose diligent efforts have made this unique preventive operation a success story thus far and provided the Macedonian people with a renewed sense of optimism for the future of their country.

While the headway made in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia is certainly encouraging and surrounding circumstances have improved significantly, we share the concern of the international community at the lingering uncertainty and volatility in the adjacent regions of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Albania and Kosovo, among others. The concurrent lack of progress in demarcating borders with the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia and the domestic inter-ethnic strain within Macedonia also warrant further attention.

Bearing in mind the foregoing factors, as well as the position of the host country, the Republic of Korea supports the extension of the UNPREDEP mandate and particularly welcomes the political compromise reached among members of the Security Council to extend the mandate for a final period of nine months. My delegation will therefore vote in favour of the draft resolution to this effect.

Finally, given the need for a continued commitment on the part of the international community to peace and stability in the region beyond this nine-month period, we strongly hope that the Secretary-General, in consultation with relevant bodies and concerned countries, including the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia itself, can in due course come up with an appropriate and viable successor arrangement to UNPREDEP.

Mr. Eguiguren (Chile) (*interpretation from Spanish*): Since its establishment more than five years ago, the United Nations Preventive Deployment Force (UNPREDEP) has played an important role in stabilizing the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and the Balkan region as a whole. We value enormously the contribution that has been made by the Preventive Deployment Force in the face of changing circumstances.

However, in spite of the apparent stability in the region following the end of the recent crisis in Albania, adverse factors still persist, at varying levels of intensity. These make it inadvisable right now to bring to a close this successful first experience of the United Nations in preventive deployment.

In this context, we should consider that, in spite of the important progress made recently in relations between the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, no definitive agreement has yet been reached on the delicate problem of the demarcation of their common border. Furthermore, the persistence of inter-ethnic tension and the possibility that potential difficulties in the region will have repercussions in the territory of Macedonia strengthen our conviction that the level of stability necessary for considering ending UNPREDEP has yet to be reached. Therefore, my delegation will vote in favour of the draft resolution by which the Security Council would extend the mandate of UNPREDEP for a period of nine months and would request the Secretary-General to submit recommendations on the type of international presence that could subsequently be established in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia.

Mr. Richardson (United States of America): The United States supports this draft resolution to extend the mandate of the United Nations Preventive Deployment Force (UNPREDEP) in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia. We congratulate the mission, the Secretary-General's Special Representative, Mr. Henryk Sokalski, the mission Force Commander, Brigadier General Bent Sohnemann, and the Permanent Representative of the Republic of Macedonia. They have ensured that UNPREDEP plays an important and highly effective role in promoting stability in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and in the region. The mission has been an unequivocal success.

We take satisfaction in the preservation of peace and stability in the region and in the gradually improving situation there. The stabilization in Albania, including through the efforts of Italy and the rest of the international community, is especially welcome, although the situation remains fragile.

All these developments have permitted the recent reduction of UNPREDEP's military force by 300 troops. This reduction demonstrates our intention to move towards an exit strategy for the mission in a measured and responsible way which preserves and builds upon the achievements of the international effort.

We remain deeply concerned, however, that significant risks remain in the region and on the borders of the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia. There is ample evidence of increasing violence and tension in Kosovo, continuing incidents along the Albanian border and persistent problems related to border demarcation issues. These factors underline that now clearly is not the time to remove, or further reduce, the military component of this highly successful mission.

We fully support the Secretary-General's intention to consult with the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, with interested organizations and with interested Member States in working toward options for an appropriate successor security mechanism which will ensure that the enormous gains made by UNPREDEP are not jeopardized when the Mission's mandate ends.

The President (*interpretation from Spanish*): I shall now make a statement in my capacity as representative of Costa Rica.

My delegation is pleased to welcome the successful work of the United Nations Preventive Deployment Force (UNPREDEP), whose presence in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia has prevented the spread of the crisis affecting neighbouring States. My delegation considers of particular importance the work of the Force in its efforts to bring together the different communities in order to promote democratic dialogue between the different political forces and ethnic communities. Likewise, we appreciate its efforts to provide humanitarian assistance to the population and help initiate development projects, which have contributed significantly to increasing social integration.

Nevertheless, like other delegations, Costa Rica is concerned about the persistence of focal points and processes of regional destabilization. We therefore believe that the presence of this Force remains necessary, and we share the judgement of the Secretary-General that when the mandate of these operations ends there must be a guarantee of proper successor arrangements, and the Government of the Republic of Macedonia must be reassured of the international community's intention to promote peace and stability in that country.

In addition, my delegation cannot fail to highlight the importance of the activities being carried out in the country and throughout the region by the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and the United Nations Children's Fund. These activities are essential to ensuring peace.

Costa Rica trusts that the United Nations Development Programme will soon be able to open an

office in the Republic of Macedonia, and hopes that it will serve as an active centre to stimulate and promote international cooperation and economic and social development there.

My delegation supports the extension of the mandate of UNPREDEP, for the last time, to 31 August 1998.

I resume my functions as President of the Security Council.

I now put to the vote the draft resolution contained in document S/1997/948.

A vote was taken by show of hands.

In favour:

Chile, China, Costa Rica, Egypt, France, Guinea-Bissau, Japan, Kenya, Poland, Portugal, Republic of Korea, Russian Federation, Sweden, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America

The President (interpretation from Spanish): There were 15 votes in favour. The draft resolution has been adopted unanimously as resolution 1142 (1997).

I shall now give the floor to those members of the Council who wish to make statements following the voting.

Mr. Lavrov (Russian Federation) (*interpretation from Russian*): Developments in the situation in Macedonia and the region, particularly after the successful handling of the acute political crisis and the stabilization of the situation in Albania, confirm how relevant and timely is restructuring of the United Nations Preventive Deployment Force (UNPREDEP), with the withdrawal of a military component from the operation. Clearly, the mandate established in 1991 and already successfully implemented — the mandate given to the Blue Helmets and their continued presence in Macedonia — cannot be an effective instrument for neutralizing today's risks to stability within and around the country. Therefore, on the question of the United Nations presence in Macedonia, the centre of gravity should now shift to the civilian area, bringing into play non-military international structures, primarily the civilian police.

The Russian Federation consistently supports this approach, noting the importance of strengthening the positive experience of UNPREDEP, as the United Nations first preventive peacemaking operation. However, while taking into account the position of interested parties, primarily that of Macedonia, and the recommendation by the Secretary-General, the Russian Federation has demonstrated maximum constructive flexibility and has agreed to the final — there is no doubt about that — extension of the mandate of UNPREDEP, until 31 August 1998, with the withdrawal of the military component immediately thereafter. There will be no artificial delays.

The resolution we have just adopted is relevant and clear; the wording permits no different interpretations. Like all decisions of the Security Council, it must be implemented unconditionally and clearly. A guarantee to that effect is the resolution's request to the Secretary-General to submit by 1 June 1998 a report containing concrete information on the modalities of the termination of UNPREDEP, including practical steps for the complete withdrawal of the military component immediately after 31 August 1998, since such a withdrawal will take a couple of days, as is confirmed by our recent experience in the withdrawal of United Nations military contingents from Haiti.

We also expect that the Secretary-General will make recommendations in his report on the optimum format for a further international presence in Macedonia.

The President (*interpretation from Spanish*): There are no further speakers on my list. The Security Council has thus concluded the present stage of its consideration of the item on its agenda.

The meeting rose at 1.30 p.m.